

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 91-141-G - ORDER NO. 92-509 /  
JULY 1, 1992

IN RE: Application of Piedmont Natural	) ORDER GRANTING
Gas Company for Authority to	) DELAY OF
Adjust and Increase its Natural	) IMPLEMENTATION
Gas Rates and Charges.	) OF WEATHER
	) NORMALIZATION
	) ADJUSTMENT

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the Staff request that this Commission consider delaying the implementation of the Weather Normalization Adjustment (WNA) in this Docket for one year past the present implementation time of the first billing cycle after November 27, 1992 as was ordered by the Commission in Order No. 91-1003. The Staff bases its request on the following. First, the Commission Consumer Services Department has received numerous complaints about the weather normalization adjustment implemented for South Carolina Electric & Gas Company (SCE&G) in Docket No. 91-342-G. Second, there has been considerable consumer confusion in this jurisdiction and in North Carolina where the WNA has been implemented by Piedmont Natural Gas Company. Third, the Staff states that further time is necessary to study the practicality of the concept in South Carolina, and to analyze data from SCE&G on its employment of the WNA during the period November 1991 through

April 1992. Also at the Staff's request, this Commission ordered through Order No. 92-458, that all parties to this Docket be allowed ten (10) days to comment on the Staff request.

Comments were received both from the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (the Consumer Advocate) and Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. (Piedmont). Both parties supported the Staff's request to delay implementation of the WNA. The Consumer Advocate stated that he had also received a number of complaints regarding SCE&G's WNA and was aware of the high degree of consumer confusion concerning the WNA. In addition, the Consumer Advocate agreed that further time is necessary to study the practicality of the concept in South Carolina as well as analyze data obtained from SCE&G through its recent employment of the WNA to determine whether and how the WNA should be modified or terminated.

Piedmont also agreed with the Commission Staff's request for a one-year delay in implementation of the WNA provided: (1) that the delay was consistent with Paragraph No. 4 of the Commission's Order of November 27, 1991, which was Order No. 91-1003, which required the Company to educate its customers on the WNA concept; (2) that the delay did not adversely affect Piedmont's pending appeal of other issues arising from Order No. 91-1003; (3) that the delay did not adversely affect Piedmont's rights to petition the Commission under Rule 103-880(B) for modification or amendment of Order No. 91-1003 of November 27, 1991; and (4) the delay did not affect Piedmont's right to file another general rate case at any time, including but not limited to any period during which implementation

of the WNA is delayed.

After consideration of the Staff's request and consideration of the responses of the Consumer Advocate and Piedmont, this Commission is of the opinion that the Staff's request should be granted, for the reasons stated by the Staff and agreed to by the Consumer Advocate. The Commission believes also that the conditions of agreement as stated by Piedmont are reasonable and we will make them a part of this Order. Also, the Commission realizes that granting the Staff's request stays the effects of the WNA portions of Order Nos. 91-1003 and 92-88 for the term of the delay, and agrees that these sections must be stayed in order for the present Order to be consistent.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That Staff's request for a delay in the implementation of the WNA for one year past the first billing cycle after November 27, 1992 is hereby granted.
2. That Piedmont shall implement the WNA by the first billing cycle after November 27, 1993, unless otherwise ordered by this Commission.
3. That Piedmont need not implement the customer education program ordered by us in Order No. 91-1003 until some time closer to November 27, 1993.
4. That the delay shall not adversely affect Piedmont's pending appeal of other issues arising from the Commission's Order of November 27, 1991 (i.e., Order No. 91-1003).
5. That the delay does not adversely affect Piedmont's

right to petition the Commission under Rule 103-880(B) for modification or amendment of the Commission's Order of November 27, 1991.

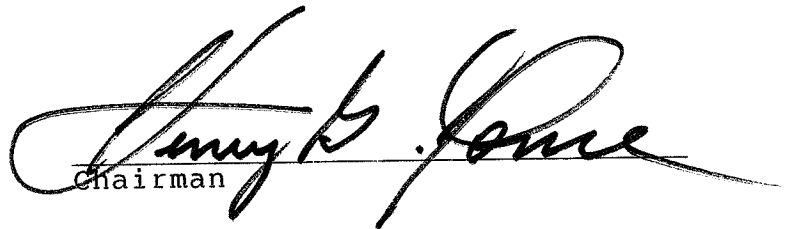
6. That the delay does not affect Piedmont's right to file another general rate case at any time after the date of this Order including, but not limited to any period during which implementation of the WNA is delayed provided said filing is in compliance with other statutes and regulations.

7. That Piedmont shall notify its customers by reasonable means of the delay in implementation of the WNA, said means to be approved by the Commission Staff prior to such notification.

8. That the portions of Order Nos. 91-1003 and 92-88 referencing the WNA are hereby stayed until the first billing cycle after November 27, 1993, or until further Order of the Commission.

9. That this Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Deputy Executive Director

(SEAL)